



CDE Update: Early Start Program

The Early Start program, which provides early intervention for children with special needs, has experienced a decline in referrals since the beginning of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Early intervention is critical for children to achieve the best possible developmental outcomes.

All 21 regional centers across California remain open and are accepting referrals to the Early Start program, although some regional center staff may be working remotely and not holding face-to-face meetings in their offices. As we navigate new challenges, Early Start will continue working to find new ways to support our consumers, families, providers, staff, and communities.

If an infant or toddler has, or is suspected of having, a delay or disability, please contact the local regional center about possible Early Start services or call 1-800-515-BABY. Anyone can make a referral.

The following materials are intended to increase public awareness and outreach:

1. **[Early Start Healthcare Provider Brochure](#)**: An easy-to-read brochure that outlines the screening, referral, and intake process.
2. **[The Early Start Community Flyer](#)**: An informative flyer for families who may have a concern about their child's development.

For more information, visit the DSS Early Start Program website at <https://www.dds.ca.gov/services/early-start/>.